

**Support disaster relief for fishermen throughout the country  
Become a co-sponsor of the bipartisan Fisheries Disaster Relief and Research  
Investment Act (H.R. 799)**

Dear Colleague:

Today, fishermen and their communities face an uncertain financial future. In the last 6 months alone, federal fisheries disasters have been declared from Alaska to Mississippi and in states up and down the eastern United States. Moreover, earlier this month the New England Fishery Management Council recommended unprecedented cuts to Gulf of Maine cod that have the potential to shut down in-shore fisheries along the east coast in less than three months. As Donald King, a fisherman from Gloucester, Massachusetts [stated on NBC Nightly News this week](#), “We’re at the end of the rope”. More must be done to ensure that the commercial fishing industry, which plays a critical role in our economy and our culture, receives the funding it needs to thrive. That’s why I’m asking you to support H.R. 799.

Each year, the federal government receives funds collected from tariffs on imported fish products. The Saltonstall-Kennedy Act of 1954 directed that a percentage of these funds go to benefit and improve our domestic fishing industry. Since then, an ever-increasing amount of those monies has been inappropriately redirected to fund the operations of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The Fisheries Disaster Relief and Research Investment Act would provide immediate assistance to those states designated by the Secretary of Commerce as fisheries disasters last year. This assistance would be funded through the fishery import duties in Fiscal Year 2014. While the specific amount that would be generated in Fiscal Year 2014 is not yet known, it is worth noting that in Fiscal Year 2013 it was \$124 million; and in Fiscal Year 2012, it was \$109 million.

Then, beginning in Fiscal Year 2015, my bill would restore the original intent of Saltonstall-Kennedy and ensure that the fishery duties collected would support grants addressing research and responsible actions to rebuild and sustain healthy fish populations.

While hardships confronting our fishermen are real and urgent, I understand how challenging it will be to secure sufficient assistance for them through the annual appropriations process. The Fisheries Disaster Relief and Research Investment Act enables Congress to help our fishermen in a responsible manner by utilizing an existing funding source and not increasing discretionary spending.

Please join me in supporting our fishermen, and co-sponsor the bipartisan Fisheries Disaster Relief and Research Investment Act.

If you would like to be a co-sponsor, please contact Natascha Cumberlidge at [natascha.cumberlidge@mail.house.gov](mailto:natascha.cumberlidge@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

John F. Tierney  
Member of Congress